

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claim 15, leaves claims 4-12 and cancels claims 1-3, 13, 14 and 16. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 4-12 and 15.

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as the invention. Various amendments were made throughout claim 15 to bring it into conformity with the requirements of 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Therefore, Applicants submit that this rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Specifically, amendments were made to claim 15 to correct the improper antecedent reference in line 3 thereof.

The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' Attorney by telephone should any further indefinite matter be discovered so that appropriate amendments may be made.

Claims 1-3, 13, 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Irie (U.S. Patent No. 5,550,823) in view of Fichou (U.S. Patent No. 5,790,522). As indicated above, claims 1-3, 13, 14 and 16 were canceled. Therefore, this rejection is rendered moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

It should be noted that the cancellation of claims 1-3, 13, 14 and 16 was not intended nor should it be considered as an agreement on Applicants' part that the features recited in claims 1-3, 13, 14 and 16 are taught or suggested any of the references of record, particularly Irie and Fichou, whether taken individually or in

combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner. The cancellation of claims 1-3, 13, 14 and 16 was simply intended to expedite prosecution of the present application.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 6 of the Office Action that claims 4-12 are allowed.

Applicants also acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 7 of the Office Action that claim 15 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the 35 USC §112, second paragraph rejection and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Amendments were made to claim 15 to overcome the 35 USC §112, second paragraph rejection and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, claim 15 is now allowable as indicated by the Examiner.

Applicants note the statements made by the Examiner in paragraphs 9 and 10 on page 7 of the Office Action. These statements made by the Examiner appear to be in error and were considered typographical errors since the statements do not correspond to the claims as they presently exist. Particularly, the statement in paragraph 10 indicates that claims 4-12 should be amended to include all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Claims 4-6 as presently pending are in fact independent claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner to withdraw these statements.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 4-12 and 15 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 4-12 and 15 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (520.36997X00).

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP



Carl I. Brundidge
Registration No. 29,621

CIB/jdc
(703) 312-6600